

REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING  
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IT is an interesting question to consider what in Napoleon's mind was to be the real extent of his dominions. By comparing the map of the French Empire given in this volume with what we know of Napoleon's ideas it appears clear that he had formed a well-considered plan of dominion, not only practicable, but which he had actually carried out almost to completion; though, like many of his plans, well grounded in itself, it suffered from the extravagant and rash attempts which often ruined the results of his usually prudent course. France, spreading to the Rhine, holding the passages of that river, extending to the Pyrenees and the Alps, and threatening England by her possession of Belgium and Holland, was to form a compact centralized State able to throw her armies with overwhelming force on any country daring to rebel. The greater part of Germany was to be composed of small States, each far too weak in itself to oppose the dominant power, but still large enough to look with jealousy on any attempt of its neighbors to absorb it. French laws and customs introduced into this Confederation, misnamed "of the Rhine," would have gradually assimilated it to France; and in a hundred years it might have been as difficult to separate it from France as it was with Alsace in 1870. Here the power of France was to stop at all events for a long period. As he himself said to Metternich in 1808, "I only wish for direct influence in Europe to the banks of the Rhine, and indirectly as far as the Elbe, the Inn, and the Isonzo. The thing is quite simple; I think I am the stronger for not going as far as the Vistula, but keeping myself more concentrated. Prussia will become the strongest power of the second order. . . . I do not desire to extend my influence beyond the natural line I have pointed out to you" (*Metternich*, vol. ii. p. 256). Here we have Napoleon in one of his best moods. Prussia and Austria, outlying States, too weak to resist, were to be left till in course of time the rising tide of French influence would overflow their frontiers and they too would assume the same position as Bavaria already held. The Austrian marriage probably saved Austria from further dismemberment. She was to remain a State nominally of the first order: indeed, by giving up her Polish provinces, she was to regain her lands on the east of the Adriatic as well as the former Venetian dominions there; that is, she was to receive the lands shown on the map as in the possession of Napoleon as the Illyrian provinces. Further, she had hopes held out to her of receiving part of Turkey; see *Metternich*, vol. i. p. 137. Thus Austria would have then held the position into which she was forced in 1886, — that of a State watching Russia, abandoning all hope of increasing her dominions in Germany, and looking for any further increase towards Turkey. The Duchy of Warsaw, increased by the Polish provinces of Russia and Austria, would have been in fact, and probably in name, a revived Poland, watching Russia and looking to France for protection.